

132.

Mr. Edwards's Sermon

On the DEATH of

Mr. WHITEFIELD.

[Price SIX-PENCE.]

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MR. W. H. WILKINSON



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1901

A Minister dead; yet speaking.

BEING THE
S U B S T A N C E
O F
TWO DISCOURSES

Preached NOVEMBER 11, 1770.

Occasioned by the Death of

The Rev. GEO. WHITEFIELD, A.M.

Late of PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD,
And Chaplain to the Countess of HUNTINGDON.

By the Rev. Mr. D. EDWARDS. *K*

DAN. xii. 3. *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.*

PSAL. cii. 12. *The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.*

The SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N.

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W. Musgrave



DEDICATION.

*To the numerous Congregations lately
under the pastoral Care of the Rev.
Mr. WHITEFIELD,*

Dear Brethren,

THE ministers of Jesus Christ in the scripture language are called stars, to signify their diffusive light and beneficial influences. As in the future state of the resurrection, some stars shall differ from others in glory; so in the present state of the church, some ministers are distinguished from others, by a brighter eminence in their endowments, and a more powerful emanation of light in their preaching. Of this select number, was that eminent divine, the Rev. Mr. Whitefield; in whom there was an union of those real excellencies of divine graces, parts, and learning, that signalized him among his brethren.---In the following discourse, I have touched his public character at large; this is but a just debt due to his memory: this is done for the benefit of his people in general, and to gospel ministers in particular. May I not address you in the
words

vi DEDICATION.

words of the apostle St. Paul? *You know his doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came upon him; you know, that as a tender compassionate father to his children, he behaved himself amongst you. The word of truth had light and spirit in his preaching, for it proceeded from a heart burning with seraphic love and zeal for the honour of Christ, and the salvation of souls. He suited his discourses to the capacity of the wise and the weak; the poor and despised were instructed by him with the same compassionate love as the rich and the learned. Great is our loss in his death! excuse me if I drop a tear as I write; he was my faithful friend. I heartily sympathize with you in the removal of so eminent an instrument in the church militant on earth; a loss which thousands this day deplore. Our language should be,—*Lord shew us wherefore thou contendest with us.* How difficult, in human appearance, to repair so great a breach!*

My Christian friends, I recommend the following discourse to your candid perusal; and shall close this address with reminding you, that though ministers die, yet Jesus still lives;—he lives to exercise the most tender care over his humble dependant flock. That promise yet stands good, *I will give you pastors according to my own heart.* The residue of the Spirit is still with him, and I trust

DEDICATION. vii

will appear for you, and strengthen the godly ministers who labour among you. Pray much with, and for one another. Keep together in the love and fear of God, and cheerfully expect his presence with you.

I remain

Your sincere Friend and Brother,

Tho' almost unknown,

D. E.

HEB.

DEDICATION

will be for you, and I trust the goodly
number who are at present in the
house will, and I trust, be
together in the love of God, and
cheerfully express his love with you.



H E B. xi. 4.

—*By it he being dead, yet speaketh.*

THIS chapter has been called by some, the apostle Paul's martyrology. It is the acts and monuments of the church of old in epitome, wherein the apostle, being guided by the Holy Ghost, has given us a faithful and honourable account of the glorious acts and victorious triumphs of the faith of the anti-ent patriarchs, prophets, and martyrs, of whom the world was not worthy. In the front of these illustrious monuments stands Abel—to his honour three things are here mentioned:

1. He offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; because his faith led him to behold the Lamb of God, which Cain did not: and agreeable to the divine testimonial, we are directed to learn of Abel a fiducial dependance on the infinite atonement of Jesus Christ.

2. We have the justification of his person in the sight of God; "by which," *i. e.* by which faith he obtained witness that he was righteous; God testifying of his gifts, he had a full assurance of the matter.

3. We have here the preciousness of his me-
B mory,

mory, and the echo of his virtuous remains after death; "by it he being dead yet speaketh."

This last sentence is what I would chiefly dwell upon at this time.

These words at first sight appear a perfect enigma, a holy riddle. Does it not sound strange, that the second man that was born in this world, and the very first that died, and has been dead five thousand years ago, and yet that he should still speak? the dead are altogether deaf and cannot hear; in vain are prayers offered to dead saints, and yet this is the folly of the Romish church; "Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not *." But though they are deaf, they are not altogether dumb; they speak not with articulate sound, yet they do speak in a figurative sense. Solomon says that the wicked man speaks with his feet, † "He winketh with his eye, he speaketh with his feet, he teaches with his fingers;" viz. he carries on his vile plots and evil devices, and the tools of his wickedness understand the wink of his eyes, the stamp of his foot, and the motion of his fingers, which an honest man understands not. The actions of bad men speak, *the transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes ‡*. Alas! what do ignorant, wicked, debauched sinners speak? in their lifetime they proclaim folly, vanity, violence, wickedness, and forgetfulness of God; and when they are dead, they leave these things as horrid examples for others. God, sometimes, by some remarkable judgement upon the ungodly, makes them speak aloud when they are dead; but then their speaking is like the wreck of a ship upon the sand, or as great rocks in the sea, informing the

* Isa. lxiii. 16. † Prov. vi. 13. ‡ Psal. xxxvi. 1.

the sailors that 'tis very dangerous. Achan, being dead, speaks to the covetous; Zimri and Cozbi speak to adulterers; Herod to the proud; Ananias and Sapphira, being dead, speak to liars; but of themselves they have no intention to speak good;—it is the prerogative of the saints of God to speak good things, even when they are dead. “He being dead, yet speaketh.”

Some have rendered the original word in a passive sense *, *i. e.* He being dead, there is an honourable mention made of him; but the active sense seems the most probable, though we will not exclude the other sense.

Let us then enquire in what sense may it be said, that Abel being dead, yet speaketh; and then apply the subject to the mournful occasion before us.

I. In what sense may it be said, that Abel being dead, yet speaketh?—Now,

Abel being dead, yet speaketh—as he was a man—as he was a believer—and as he was a martyr.

1. He speaketh as he was a man.—Abel being dead, proclaims death to all mankind. *It is appointed for all men once to die*, is the decree of heaven. Abel, when he died, in effect said to all his relations, “O my brethren and sisters! ye
“ sons and daughters of Adam, remember that
“ ye are all mortals! mortality is your property.
“ There is a principle of corruption in your very
“ natures. Dust ye are, and to dust your bodies
“ must return. No state or condition in life can
“ ascertain your preservation a single moment;
“ —so strong is the tyrant death, that nothing
“ can resist his force;—so unerring is his aim,
“ that nothing can elude his blow;—sudden as
B 2 lightning

* *Εἰς λαλεῖται. Adhuc celebratur.*

“ lightning his arrow may be launch’d, which
 “ may wound and kill in the twinkling of an
 “ eye. Never rest satisfied but in a constant pre-
 “ paration. Let every one look upon himself
 “ in his best estate, like my name which signi-
 “ fies vanity. Glory not in your strength, or
 “ beauty, vigour, or maturity. Trust not in
 “ the courage of your hearts, or the dexterity
 “ of your arms, for these cannot withstand the
 “ assailing enemy.”

2. Abel as a man being dead, yet speaketh, that death may surprize us unawares; death may snatch us away from the company of our friends suddenly; we may be hurried to the awful bar without a moment, without leisure to take a last farewell of our friends, or put up a single petition to heaven. Abel was surprized by death in the field, and conversing with his brother. It was Abel’s happiness that God was his God; therefore sudden death to every true convert is sudden glory; but sudden death to the wicked is sudden judgement, and sudden hell. What numbers are removed out of the world in haste! Nabal * was snatched away from his feast, Belshazzar from his cups †, Herod in his pomp ‡, and the fool in the gospel, who promised himself many years of ease and merriment, was hurried away unexpectedly ||. With God are the issues of life and death; he conducteth those things which are called by men accidents and chance; none of those things can happen without his signing the warrant; hence it is that some sink from the chair to the floor, and in an instant become deaf to the most piercing shrieks of their distracted relations. Some give up the ghost as they

* 1 Sam. xxv. 36. † Dan. v. ‡ Acts xii. 23. || Luke xii. 20. Rom. ix. 15.

they recline under the shady arbour ; some taken away as they sail in a party of pleasure ; some intercepted as they return home from their journey ; some arrested with the gain of injustice in their hands ; yea, many have been surprized by death in the very act of lewdness and cruelty.

II. Abel as a believer in Christ, though dead, yet speaketh. What does he speak as a believer ?

1. He clearly proclaims that the grace of God is free. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. It is the free grace of God that made the difference between Abel and Cain ; by nature they were both children of wrath, and apostates from God, having their whole nature contaminated by sin. For ought appears, both of them were partakers of the same means of grace ; Cain had the free offer of mercy and salvation by the great Messiah that was to come, as Abel had ; yea, the great Jehovah condescended to argue the case with him, compassionately and convincingly expostulated with him, saying, Cain, why art thou wroth ? why is thy countenance fallen ? if thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted * ? But all these things he despised and rejected ; he put away the word of eternal life † that was sent him, therefore he was justly condemned. Behold then the manifest difference between these two brothers, the one righteous, the other wicked ; one justified, the other condemned ; one a child of light, the other a child of the wicked one.

2. Abel, a believer, though dead, yet speaketh—what ? That we must be justified before God by faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ. By faith Abel obtained witness that he was righteous. Cain had the form of religion ;
he

* Gen. iv. 6, 7.

† Acts xiii. 46.

he brought his offering, but he believed not. Abel had faith and works; he believed and offered; he looked to the eternal Immanuel, the great Anti-type of all sacrifices; he is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world *; and he did by faith behold the Lamb of God through the sacrifice he offered, who taketh away the sin of the world.

3. Abel, a believer, being dead, yet speaketh—what? That the grace of God does not privilege and exempt the Christian from some of the most bitter crosses, or the most cruel death; they are subject to sorrow upon sorrow. Abel, though an eminent saint, yet died a violent death, and that by the hand of a brother, of whom he might say, *It was not an enemy, else I could have borne it: but it was a man, my brother, mine equal, my guide, and my acquaintance* †: the grace of God doth not exempt the Christian from the greatest crosses, or the most cruel death. But,

4. Abel, as a believer, yet speaks, that the greatest crosses and afflictions shall not make void the grace of God. In the deepest trials he was the beloved of God, and he plainly proclaims that God knoweth the soul of his saints in adversity ‡; he chuseth them in the furnace of affliction; he telleth their wanderings, and putteth their tears in his bottle ||; their supplications come before him, their sighs and groans are not hid from him.

5. Abel as a believer, being dead, yet speaks—that it is a great advantage to live under the means of grace. From whence had he his faith? He had it from God, for it is his gift; but he had it in the use of the means. We have reason
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* Rev. xiii. 8. † Psal. lv. 12. ‡ 2 Sam. iv. 9. || Psal. xxxvi. 8.

to think that he had religious instruction from his father, who was a priest in his house; *now faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* *.

6. Faithful Abel being dead, yet speaketh aloud to all, that the great Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, one God, is to be worshipped, as he is the Author of our being, and the great Ocean of all perfection and happiness; he is the Lord of life, upon him we daily depend; he is our King and Lawgiver, *his we are, and him we are bound to serve*. He testifies that he is to be worshipped in faith; *It was by faith he offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*. He is to be worshipped according to his own institution, and not according to men's inventions. Abel testifies that he is to be worshipped with inward heart-worship, as well as outward, in private and public, and also with the best. Abel brought unto the worship the best he had, *the firstlings of his flock*; the prime, not the weak, the lame, the blind, the torn; for he knew that God was a great King,—to teach us that we should shake off sloth, deadness, and coldness of heart in the worship of God: bring with you the best of your affections, the kindness of your youth †, the ripeness of your age, the strength of your parts, the zeal of your affections, and the intenseness of your hearts; *thou shalt love the Lord-thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength*, is our Lord's command.

Abel testifies that the best offerings we bring are acceptable alone through the great Mediator. God accepted of Abel's offerings for Christ's sake, *and we are accepted in the beloved*.

Some think that Abel had a family of his

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* Rom. x. 17.

† Isa. i.

own, and that he was painful as a priest in teaching and instructing those around him in the way of righteousness. If so, his death proclaims that God has no need of the most eminent instruments; for when such are removed, he can raise others in their room. Though Abel dies, yet the church shall not die with him. It is true, when eminent ministers that were faithful to the truth, and to the souls of men, are removed by death, such removals call aloud for mourning and lamentation from the churches. When Moses died, all Israel mourned. We read that Jacob's family lamented the death of Rebekah's nurse; that the scripture takes particular notice of the place of her burial, calling it *Allon-Bacuth* *, the oak of weeping. Good ministers in the churches are spiritual nurses, and there is a debt of grateful honourable tears due to them when they die. How bitterly did Elisha lament the removal of Elijah, saying, *My father! my father! the chariot of Israel and horsemen thereof* †: he esteemed Elijah of more use than all the cavalry in the world to defend the kingdom. And we read that when Stephen was stoned, that *devout men carried him to his burial, and made great lamentations* ‡. We read also that the people fell upon Paul's neck and wept sore, because they should *see his face no more*. Yet let us remember, that though the most gifted and most useful ministers die, yet the church shall not die. Religion shall not die with them. Jesus still lives. Adam's family shall not perish for want of a righteous Abel; God is not beholden to means, tho' he condescends to make use of them; he can work by weak instruments as well as strong. Joseph was an eminent instrument for protecting and

* Gen. xxxv. 8. † 2 Kings ii. 12. ‡ Acts viii. 2.

and providing for the family of Jacob in Egypt; but Joseph was a mortal man; Joseph must die; and what then? Must the church perish in the land of Ham, and be destroyed in the fields of Zoan? No. What said Joseph when he was dying? Behold I die, said he, but God will be with you, and will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land*. Ministers and eminent instruments may die, but the church shall survive.

III. Abel, though dead, yet he speaks to the living as a martyr for the truth. By his death he proclaims that there is an eternal enmity between the seed of the woman † and the seed of the serpent, between the saint and the sinner, between the righteous and unrighteous, the holy and profane. They are as opposite one to another as light is to darkness. There can be no accommodation or agreement between them; for what agreement can there be between Christ and Belial? Abel found the truth of our Lord's words, "that the brother shall deliver up the brother to death."‡ There is no enmity and hatred so strong as that which burns in the heart of the ungodly against the power of godliness. It offers violence to nature. It breaks through the strongest ties and obligations. It blots out the memory of the father that begat, and the mother that bare, and the breasts that gave suck. It forgetteth natural affection and relation, and debaileth a person to a beast, a fury, yea, an incarnate

* Gen. l. 24.

† Should the reader be inclined to see the subject of men's enmity and hatred against the power of godliness, treated at large, he may see it in a striking light in the Rev. Mr. Whitefield's sermon entitled "Persecution every Christian's Lot," printed in London.

‡ Matth. x. 21.

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devil.

devil. Historians tells us that Herod not only killed all the children in the province of Judea, but murdered his own son, in hopes to kill Jesus. All who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution of one kind or another. Christ and his cross—true religion and persecution—holiness and affliction are bound together, with a bond that cannot be broken. The followers of Christ are strangers in this world, and must expect hard usage one way or another. They are soldiers and warriors fighting under the banner of Christ, against all sin, the world and its evil customs, and against all infernal powers; therefore they must expect to meet with blows. True believers are travellers in a strange country; they move in the path of holiness, and they must expect to meet with crosses, and some foul weather.

2. Abel in dying as a martyr plainly speaks that precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*; the death of Abel, although a violent death, was precious in the sight of God. He took special notice of it; he made inquisition for his blood. He asked Cain "where is Abel thy brother? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." The death of all the godly is precious, especially the death of martyrs.

3. The violent death of Abel proclaims aloud to all that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness. The wrongs and injuries done to the godly on earth, plainly prove a judgement to come. *It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them who trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us.* †

* Psal. cxv. 16.

† 2 Thes. i. 5, 6, 7.

Much might be said upon this article, but I hasten to observe that if you take the words of the text in a passive sense, that Abel being dead, is honourably spoken of, this will hold true also. He is well spoken of. Our Lord calls him righteous Abel *. He was one of the elders that obtained a good report for his zeal, meekness, integrity, and strict adherence to the ways of God; wherever the scripture is read or preached, this also which Abel has done and suffered shall be published in the world. Abel's faith, holiness, and good conversation, his sufferings and martyrdom, shall be honourably spoken of—"the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot." We read in the sixth of Genesis of the giants that were on the earth; mighty men, men of renown: they were giants in nature, in stature, in pomp and state, in condition and quality; but they were giants in wickedness; therefore their names have no room in God's chronicle. But Abel, Seth, Enos, Mahaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, and others, their names are handed down, and perpetuated to this day. They are recorded with honour, while the giants are buried in forgetfulness. When the names of great sinners are mentioned in scripture, it is with a blot, with disgrace and infamy. So we read of bloody Cain, hunting Nimrod, hard-hearted Pharaoh, painted Jezebel, incorrigible Ahab, proud Herod, ambitious Diotrophes; but who, and what are they when compared with martyred Abel, righteous Noah, faithful Abraham, plain-hearted Jacob, meek Moses, holy Hannah, zealous Phineas, praying Samuel, patient Job, penitent Peter, with multitudes more of holy men and women, whose names are writ-

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* Matt. xxiii. 35.

ten in the book of life? Their names shall be had in everlasting remembrance, however despised or persecuted they were in this world. True religion has been ever esteemed the best nobility by the truly wise;* but I proceed to improve the solemn subject which brought the text to my thoughts.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

1. We may plainly infer from hence, that 'tis our incumbent duty to take special notice of the life and conversation of those who were eminent in faith and holiness, whether they be ministers or private christians.

They speak to us by the precious graces which shone in them; they speak to us by their holy life; by the good works which they performed; by the pious examples which they set before us; they speak to us by the sharp trials they passed through; by the bitter sufferings they bore, and wherein they were made more than conquerors: by these the godly who are dead do yet speak unto the living. They speak in vindication of truth, and to the shame of wickedness; they speak to the honour of Jesus Christ and his cause; they speak to the conviction, correction, edification, and salvation of the living, and we ought to follow them as far as they followed Christ; so the apostle directs, *Remember them that had the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.* † Many faithful ministers have been lately called home; and last week gave me the awful assurance of the sudden and unexpected death of the

* *Hæc tua nobilitas sola est, atque unica virtus.*

† Heb. xiii. 7.

the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, a star of the first magnitude in the church on earth. What! Whitefield dead!—a greater loss, when all things considered, could not perhaps befall the church of God in the death of a single person*; one whom God had separated, and called by his grace to preach the everlasting gospel to the world of sinners. His tongue was as choice silver, like Isaiah's, touched with a coal from God's altar: whose lips fed many; whose doctrines fell as the rain, and whose speech distilled as the dew; whose life shined as the light; and whose zeal provoked others; his labours were abundantly blessed; his earnest solemn prayers pierced the heavens; at his presence bold sinners blushed; his thunderings awakened secure consciences; his searching sermons made hypocrites tremble; by whose instrumentality the kingdom of darkness shaked, and the powers of hell fell in many places: he was a burning and a shining light; a scribe well instructed for the kingdom of God, and brought forth out of his treasure things new and old. He is gone! he is gone! his course is finished; his race is run; his work is done, and is now joining with patriarchs, prophets, saints, and angels, martyrs and confessors, in the church triumphant above, admiring and adoring free-redeeming love; his wide unbounded desires infinitely satisfied. But who will go out to the highways and hedges† to invite sinners to come in? Who will reprove our ungodly, intemperate,

* The following lines of the pious Dr. Watts may be applied with propriety, only varying the name.

Whitefield is dead! how doleful is the sound!

How vast the stroke is! and how wide the wound!

O painful stroke! distressing death! a wound unmeasurably wide!

No vulgar mortal dy'd, when he resign'd his breath.

† Luke xiv. 23.

rate, violent, profane, blasphemous generation? under whom the earth groaneth, and hell gapeth for them. Shall these live, and must Whitefield die! What mercenary hirelings and greedy wolves * are crept into the church of God, not regarding nor sparing the flocks! shall these live and thou die? What dark corners are there in these kingdoms and in America, that require light! What numbers of hungry souls are craving for bread! What desolate congregations mourn in silence! Is this a time for thee to die? Could not the necessity of the church, or the prayers of the godly hold thee any longer? But where will my thoughts carry me! righteous art thou, O Lord God, in all thy doings; we will not plead with thee concerning thy judgements †; thy will be done. Recollect thyself, O my passionate soul! wipe thine eyes from tears! read the text; "he being dead, yet speaketh"—*mutato nomine*, vary only the name; change Abel for Whitefield, and I may say he still speaks; but to whom?

1. He speaks in his public character, as a minister, to all protestant ministers, whether in the established church, or among dissenters.

The ardent love he bore to the Lord Jesus Christ was remarkable. The heart-felt experience of this divine principle constrained ‡ him to an unwearied application to the service of the gospel; and transported him, at times, in the eyes of some, beyond the bounds of sober reason. He was content to be a fool for his sake; to be despised, so Christ might be honoured; to be nothing, that Jesus might be all in all. He had such a sense of the incomparable excellence of the person of Christ; of his adorable condescension

* Acts xx. 29. † Jer. xii. 1. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 14.

sion in taking our nature upon him, and enduring the curses of the holy law; his complete suitability and sufficiency as the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption of his people, that he could never say enough of him. He was so convinced of the happy tendency and efficacy of this principle in his own mind, that he made use of it, and proposed it to others, in the room of a thousand arguments, whenever he would inculcate the most unreserved obedience to the whole will of God, or stir up believers to a holy diligence in adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things: inspired by this principle, nothing frightened or flattered him from his duty; indeed without this the tongues of men and angels avail but little; without this, men that put on the ministerial character will be soon drawn aside by the frowns or the smiles of the world; interest or human applause may stimulate a man to shine as a scholar, a philosopher, or a critic, but till the love of Jesus rules in the heart of a preacher, he will neither have inclination or power to exert himself for the glory of God, or the good of souls.

2. Another pleasing ingredient in his character, and a sure evidence of the former, was love to the souls of mankind. He rejoiced in their prosperity as one that had found great spoil; and with St. Paul was willing to spend and be spent in promoting their happiness. He loved all who loved Jesus Christ in sincerity, however they might differ in some circumstantialities. He embraced all opportunities to expose the malignant leaven of a party, and to remove prejudices and misapprehensions, which good people too often entertain of one another, when under the influence of a sectarian humour. Love to God's
 5 people,

people, and to the souls of mankind, is an essential qualification in a minister of Christ; for although a man should possess the powers of a prophet or an angel, or the zeal of a martyr, if he is destitute of this love, he is in the sight of God no better than a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. *

3. His attachment to the great doctrines of the gospel was inflexible; having known their worth, and experienced their power in his own heart, he plainly saw, that though they were unacceptable to the carnal heart, yet they bore the plain impress of the infinite wisdom of God. Those important truths, which tend to humble the sinner, to exalt Christ, and promote holiness in heart and life, were his darling subjects. He did not disguise gospel truths by some artful sweetening, to render it more palatable to men of corrupt minds. He studied to preach the word in its purity, plainness, and simplicity. The warmth of his zeal disgusted many who make a mighty outcry about candour and charity, and are willing to extend it to every sentiment, except the truths in which the apostles gloried in. It was his love to the truths of God, and the souls of men, that led him to expose those who plead for the rectitude and excellency of human nature; denied the proper Godhead of Jesus Christ, justification by faith in his righteousness imputed, or the new-birth, and the absolute necessity of the operations of the Holy Ghost. Faith and holiness were ever united together in his system, in opposition to those who pretend to faith without obedience to the law of God as the rule of life. He knew errors in the great truths of the gospel are not indifferent, but dreadful

* 2 Cor. xiii.

dreadful and fatal. He knew 'twas not candour and charity to say that errors in judgement are not hurtful, but the greatest unmercifulness and cruelty; therefore he often reproved such sharply.

Although he was so tenacious of the foundation truths of the gospel, yet none more candid in things that are not essential; herein he was full of gentleness and forbearance.—In things indifferent he became *all things to all men* *.

4. To the foregoing particulars in Mr. Whitefield's character, I may add his zeal. His Christian zeal was like the light of the sun which did warm, shine and cherish, but knew not to destroy; full of generous philanthropy and benevolence. His zeal made him exceeding earnest and importunate in his addresses to saints and sinners---his zeal returned blessings for curses, and prayers for ill-treatment.—It kindled in him a becoming indignation against the errors, follies and sins of the times---it led him to weep bitterly over those who would not be persuaded to fly from the wrath to come—it made him bold and intrepid in the cause of God, and kept him from that flatness and deadness which is too visible in some good ministers.---In these things he was an example to ministers of every denomination: and, if the limits of my discourse would admit, I could mention many things as to his great charity to the poor---his humility,

* Should the reader have a desire to see the difference between essentials and non-essentials in religion more fully explained, I would refer him to the Rev. Mr. Newton of Olney's book, entitled, "A Review of Ecclesiastical History," p. 274, 275, &c. where the matter is set forth in a striking point of view: the whole history is excellent, and far preferable to any thing that has been published by historians on that subject. Printed by Dilly.

&c. but this would lead me too far.—Therefore I proceed to take notice, that he being dead, yet speaketh

To young students in divinity, that natural and acquired accomplishments are necessary in their place, but by no means to be depended upon. His college education was of service to him; but if he had not received the teaching of the Spirit of God, he would have been no better than others.—Give therefore attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine*, and study that you may be approved of unto God, workmen that needⁿot to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth†; see to it that you know the grace of God in truth. An unconverted minister is utterly improper to teach others in the things of God; a profane man may as soon be devout by reading a treatise of devotion; a man in misery be happy in reading a dissertation upon happiness; or a sick man to be in health by reading a treatise on health, as an unconverted, unrenewed, graceless minister, be capable of fulfilling the work of the ministry in a faithful manner. If you come forth to your work well furnished under the unction of the Holy Spirit, you will be the happy instruments of spreading Bible-religion from house to house, from family to family; whenever you appear in the pulpit, the godly will look up to heaven for his blessing, and upon you as some kind angels who are sent to unfold the mysteries of the gospel, and teach them the way of salvation.

Venerable Mr. Whitefield being dead, yet speaketh—to whom? To the inhabitants of the three kingdoms and the colonies. O England! Scotland! Wales! Ireland! America! did he

* 1 Tim. iv. 19.

† 2 Tim. ii. 15.

he not faithfully consult your temporal and eternal welfare? Did he not study to promote your eternal peace and happiness? that peace might be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces *, were the intense desire of his heart. Your abounding iniquities were his grief; he wept in secret for the pride, Sabbath-breaking, and abominations that were found in you, and his soul was often humbled in fasting: wherein you were ignorant, he endeavoured to enlighten you; he strove to reclaim and reform you; his books, his study, his pulpit, the public assemblies, his own and other families can bear witness how he laboured in word and doctrine; how he preached the word in season and out of season; how he reproved, exhorted, rebuked, with all long-suffering; and do ye still continue in unbelief and disobedience? If so, remember that the parish-churches and meeting-houses in which he preached; the high-ways and hedges; the wide extended commons where he often stood to publish the glad tidings; the wood-lands of America, yea, and the firmament, which was oft his sounding-board, will rise up in judgement as witnesses against you in the last day, if you die in your sins.

——But more particularly,

He speaks to you who were more immediately under his pastoral care, and more constant instruction, who meet at the tabernacle, Tottenham-court-chapel, Bristol, Gloucester, Hodborough, Dursley, &c. many times did he speak to you in the name of the Lord, but now you shall see his face no more. May I not, without breach of charity, beseech you to enquire whether London-sins did not bereave you of so eminent a pastor in the midst of his usefulness? Is it not the judge-

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* Psal. cxxii. 7.

ment which God has threatened against the vineyard that did not answer her tillage, that he will command the clouds that they rain not upon it*?

O London! London! thou art not in an equal state with other places, but like Capernaum †, lifted up to heaven with privileges; not only Mr. Whitefield, but numbers of other godly ministers can join issue with him, and appeal to your consciences, saying, “ You yourselves know, “ and we call God to witness from the first day “ of our coming among you, after what manner “ we have been among you at all times, serving “ the Lord with all humility of mind; and with “ many tears and temptations which beset us; “ and that we have kept nothing that was profitable unto you; and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying to “ all repentance towards God, and faith towards “ our Lord Jesus Christ; we take you to record, “ that we are free from the blood of all men, “ for we have not shunned to declare to you the “ whole counsel of God ‡.”

He speaketh to you who have heard the word of God from his mouth, but believed not the report, or regarded the message. Are there any amongst you of that number? I fear there are not a few; but be assured, that *whoso despiseth, despiseth not man but God*. A book of remembrance is kept before the Lord, and the word shall judge you in the last day. If it does not convert you, it will condemn you.—Dear Mr. Whitefield’s feet will climb up your pulpits no more; his voice will address you no more; those eyes which wept over you many times will see you no more till the judgement is set, and the books

* Isa. v. 6.

† Matth. xi. 23.

‡ Acts xx. 18.

books are opened *; till the dead, both small and great, stand before God to be tried. Oh! what a terrible office will it be for a minister to be called, and to appear as a swift witness against those whom he once earnestly invited to accept of complete salvation by Christ! Spare him this afflictive task, or rather spare yourselves, by turning to the Lord with your whole heart. If his labours in life were past unnoticed by you, O let his death be the means of rousing you out of your lethargy! Why will you constrain him to come forth against you in the day of judgement, and to alledge before the throne? saying, "I warned
 " these people; I exhorted them; I intreated
 " them by all that was sacred; I set before them
 " the terrors of the law, and the sweet allure-
 " ments of the everlasting gospel; thy threa-
 " tenings and promises; the torments of hell,
 " and the joys of heaven; but I spent my
 " strength in vain; they were deaf to my coun-
 " sels, and they would none of my reproof."

I pray God that the mournful news of his death may bring the great truths which he preached to your remembrance afresh, and be the means of turning you to the Lord, that you perish not.

He being dead, yet speaketh to you all, who through grace believe in Jesus by his word. Tho' your minister is dead, the eternal Immanuel still lives, and has such an exceeding abundant fulness above all that we are able to ask or think; above all that can be described or desired. That eminent servant of Christ, whose death we with thousands more lament, often told you of the glories of the person of Christ as God-man; the surprising suitableness of his offices, as prophet,
 priest,

* Dan. vii. 10.

priest, and king; the excellency of his titles, characters, and relations; the diversified operations of his Spirit, and the blessings of his word: O then glory in God your Saviour! seek him in all your wishes; keep close to him according to the rule of his word; in all your deeds regard him and his honour; meditate upon him when you are alone; talk of him when you meet together; when you lie down, when you rise up, let Jesus be the delight of your thoughts; let the remembrance of his blessed name sweeten your business, and consecrate your leisure moments; *cleave to him as the girdle cleaveth to a man's loins**; as children of the Most High, as disciples of the Redeemer, apply to his infinite power for help; as most unworthy, apply to his free grace; in all your distresses, doubts, and fears, fly to Christ for whatever you stand in need of, so shall he hide you under the shadow of his wings, and keep you as the apple of his eye; in all your passage to eternity, he will go before you as your shelter and leading light; in all the dangers of your warfare, he will follow you with his protecting providence, comfort you by his Spirit; he will be your God unto death, your consolation in death, and afterwards; your eternal portion for ever. In yonder heavenly world, you shall meet your dear minister, whose death you now deplore, (with all the saved race) and join them in singing the song of Moses, and the Lamb for ever. Whilst you continue in the church militant on earth, beware of divisions among yourselves; encourage and countenance the godly ministers who labour amongst you; guard carefully against errors in doctrine and practice; *hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering*; let the

* Jer. xiii. 11.

the word of God be your rule, and the Spirit of God your guide; live in love; pray earnestly to the great God of the harvest, that he would send forth faithful labourers to succeed those that are called home to glory. Several ministers have been removed by death this year; some of them laboured long amongst you, and were not ashamed to, nor ashamed of the despised Methodists; faithful Mr. Howell Davies, Mr. Adams, and now Mr. Whitefield, who begun, continued, and closed their ministry, as beholding him that is invisible. Blessed triumvirate! now beyond the reach of every sorrow. When faithful labourers are called home, 'tis a sign that there is a storm coming; that judgements are drawing nigh the land. When Elisha was dead, the first news we hear, that the Moabites invaded the land of Israel*. Methuselah died a year before the deluge came; Austin died but a little while before the sacking of Hyppo; Pareus a little before Hiddleburge was destroyed; Mr. Luther died but a little time before the dreadful wars broke out in Germany: he used to tell his people often, "I see the storm coming upon Germany, for the contempt of the gospel; I wrestle hard with God to keep it off; but when I am dead, see to it." Mr. Whitefield was a second Luther, but he is called home. I cannot but look upon the death of faithful ministers and godly people, as separating the Israelites from the tents of Corah; like Noah entering the ark, or Lot's going out of Sodom; and you know what followed. O let the thoughts of these things cause us to provide an ark, and get a safe refuge! Let the godly of all denominations of Christians, cry mightily to the Lord, that he would raise up
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* 2 Kings xiii. 20.

young Samuels in the room of old Eli's; young Elishas in the room of old Elijahs; young Timothies in the room of aged Pauls; that there may be a succession of able faithful ministers to hold forth the word of eternal life to the people.

I might point out other particulars, in which, though your minister be dead, yet speaketh; but 'tis time to conclude. You that have heard him often, and continue in your sins, seriously consider; how will you look in his face in the last day, when the quick and dead shall be judged? And you who heard him, and received benefit by his ministry, bless God that you ever saw and heard to advantage: now you must see his face no more, look more by faith unto Jesus, whose love is unchangeable. Ministers of the greatest grace and gifts are like candles, that are soon extinguished by death, but the Sun of Righteousness shines perpetually. Cisterns are dried up, but the fountain of life is ever full, ever flowing. You are bereaved of a burning and shining light, but he could continue but for a season; but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. To him I commend you all, and to the word of his grace, who is able and willing to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.—

Amen! Amen!



F I N I S.

